



November 5, 2007

Mr. Kevin Martin
Chairman, Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW:
Room: 8-B201
Washington, DC 20554

Re: **NFL Network and Other Independent Programmers**

Dear Chairman Martin:

We are writing today as members of the Football 24.7 Carolina steering committee. We are concerned that thousands of football fans are not able to watch NFL Network because cable systems to which they subscribe in both North and South Carolina are refusing to add it to their basic cable package. These cable systems require them to purchase other sports networks -- such as Versus and the Golf Channel -- that they never watch. We are concerned by cable companies' discrimination against NFL Network and against other high-quality non-sports independent channels in favor of less popular channels that the cable companies own.

We understand that the FCC has opened a rulemaking proceeding (MB Docket 07-42) to consider program carriage issues such as these -- particularly as they relate to independent and diverse channels.

We hear more and more that -- just like NFL Network and other independent sports channels -- non-sports independent channels face discrimination from big cable companies that own many of the channels they carry. Some independent channels like the Oxygen Network are choosing to sell themselves to large media holding companies rather than to try to continue as stand-alone businesses. It is not a good trend since this increasing concentration will reduce media diversity and consumer choice.

We also note that in connection with another high-profile sports channel carriage dispute -- the one between Comcast and the Mid-Atlantic Sports Network (MASN) in the Washington, DC area in 2005 -- the FCC's decision to appoint an arbitrator to settle the dispute caused the parties to reach a negotiated solution. We urge the FCC to consider changing its rules to facilitate appointment of an arbitrator in disputes like the one involving the NFL Network, so they can be resolved more quickly (preferably through negotiation between the parties) and with consumers' interests foremost in mind. If such a mechanism were in place, it might help persuade the cable companies to negotiate a carriage deal with NFL Network before Carolina football fans are deprived of the NFL Network game telecasts that begin this season on Thanksgiving night.

P.O. Box 28112 Raleigh, NC 27611

We are signing this letter on behalf of each of the Members of the Football247carolina steering committee that join us in our support of a change in the FCC rules to facilitate appointment of an arbitrator in these types of disputes.

Thank you for reviewing these matters.



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Former member SC Public Service Commission
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